

## The Self-Destruct Scheme

**F**UNCTIONAL spies and sleuths abound in the world of television and paperback books, each with his own distinctive device that sets him apart from ordinary men and women as an evil genius. But there is almost no common ground between these supersleuths and the intelligence workers of the real world.

The impressive fact about our intelligence agencies is not that they invent and use diabolical devices, which they do not, but that they utilize the most modern technology and many long years of specialized study to produce analyses of events and capabilities on which nations base their policies. Of the two, while technology is important, the long years of study are the major factors in the excellence of American intelligence work.

Those were some of the facts behind the presentation Lt. Gen. Vernon Walters made to the Oklahoma City Rotary Club Tuesday, in which he took the recent attacks on the Central Intelligence Agency, one by one, and answered each by putting the criticism alongside the facts.

Walters cited the charges stemming from revelations that some 15 years ago some CIA personnel seriously contemplated attempting the assassination of Fidel Castro. He reminded his audience that at the time Castro was shooting thousands of Cubans in the stadium, on live television, every day or so, and that many Americans found this a disturbing thing to have on our doorstep. But he made the telling point

that consideration did not result in action—no one was assassinated.

The infamous toxins, which the CIA itself recently revealed to Congress, were developed when the agency wanted to learn how the Russians were killing emigres who became bones in the Communist throat—that was more than 20 years ago now—and developed the reported poisons to test their effectiveness, and to learn if there was a way to protect our own people from them.

The drugs which the CIA tested were a part of a broad national effort to learn more about such mind-bending agents, when they were new to Americans, including the medical professions. That came in the wake of the Korean War experience, and the degradations of such courageous men as Cardinal Mindszenty.

These efforts to learn more about our avowed adversaries in the world and their person-to-person weapons of war are being used today to pillory the entire intelligence establishment. Yet they occurred almost a generation ago, before the present CIA leadership was even involved at the agency.

In keeping up a drumroll of such criticism, which paints the CIA as a nest of terrifying threats to our freedom, some of its critics seem to hope it will become one of those TV "self-destruct" mechanisms, and disappear. But the CIA's service is so vital that if it did not exist today, we would have to invent it. Its mission, after all, is to ensure that there will be a United States in the future.